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O D E

TO THE

NAVAL OFFICERS

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

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GREAT BRITAIN.

WRITTEN, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIAL OF ADMIRAL KEPPEL, FEBRUARY THE ELEVENTH, 1779.

BY W. MASON, M. A.

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MDCCLXXIX.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Ode was written at the time of its date, and a few manuſcript copies of it then given to the Author's friends, with permiſſion to circulate them among their acquaintance. A mode of publication which he adopted for the preſent, till an opportunity might offer itſelf of printing it in ſome future collection of his Poems; in which he hoped (more out of reſpect to the ſubject than to himſelf) that it might be preſerved, as long as any thing he has written ſhould merit preſervation. But, ſince an inaccurate copy has lately ſtolen into a public newſpaper; he has thought proper to print a more correct edition of it, in this ſeperate form. For, while the enemys of Mr. Keppel ſeem to attack his cauſe with increaſing virulence, it is ſurely right to continue the application of every honeſt antidote.

In the Preſs, and ſpeedily will be publiſhed,

By the ſame Author,

THE THIRD BOOK OF THE

ENGLISH GARDEN.

O D E.

I. 1.

HENCE to thy Hell! thou fiend accurſt,
Of Sin's inceſtuous brood, the worſt
Whom to pale Death the ſpectre bore: *
Detraction hence! 'tis Truth's command,
She lanches, from her ſeraph hand,
The ſhaft that ſtrikes thee to th' infernal ſhore.
Old ENGLAND's Genius leads her on
To vindicate his darling ſon,
Whoſe fair, and veteran fame
Thy venom'd tongue had dar'd defile;
The Goddeſs comes, and all the iſle
Feels the warm influence of her heav'nly flame.

I. 2.

But chief in thoſe, their country's pride,
Ordain'd, with ſteady helm, to guide
The floating bulwarks of her reign,
It glows, with unremitting ray,
Bright as the orb that gives the day,
Corruption ſpreads her murky miſt in vain;

* Alluding to the well known allegory of Sin and Death in the ſecond Book of Paradiſe Loſt.

To Virtue, Valour, Glory true,
They keep their radiant prize in view
Ambitious ſterling aim;
They know that titles, ſtars, and ſtrings,
Beſtow'd by Kings on ſlaves of Kings,
Are light as air when weigh'd with honeſt fame.

I. 3.

Hireling Courtiers, venal Peers,
View them with faſtidious frown,
Yet the Muſe's ſmile is theirs,
Theirs her amaranthine crown.
Yes, gallant Train, on your unſullied brows,
She ſees the genuine Engliſh ſpirit ſhine,
Warm from a heart where antient Honour glows,
That ſcorns to bend the knee at Intereſt's ſhrine.
Lo! at your Poet's call,
To give prophetic fervor to his ſtrain,
Forth from the mighty boſom of the main
A Giant Deity aſcends;
Down his broad breaſt his hoary honours fall;
He wields the trident of th' Atlantic vaſt;
An awful calm around his Pomp is caſt,
O'er many a league the glaſſy ſleep extends.
He ſpeaks; and diſtant Thunder, murmuring round,
In long-drawn volly rolls a ſymphony profound.

II. 1.

Ye Thunders ceaſe! the voice of Heav'n
Enough proclaims the Terrors given
To Me the Spirit of the deep;
Tempeſts are mine; from ſhore, to ſhore,
I bid my billows when to roar,
Mine the wild whirlwind's deſolating ſweep.
But meek and placable I come
To deprecate Britannia's doom,
And ſnatch her from her fate;
Ev'n from herſelf I mean to ſave
My ſiſter ſov'reign of the wave;
A voice immortal never warns too late.

II. 2.

Queen of the iſles! with empire crown'd,
Only to ſpread fair Freedom round
Wide as my waves could waft thy name,
Why did thy cold reluctant heart
Refuſe that bleſſing to impart;
Deaf to great Nature's univerſal claim?
Why ruſh, through my indignant tide,
To ſtain thy hands with parricide?
—Ah, anſwer not the ſtrain!
Thy waſted wealth, thy widows ſighs,
Thy half-repentant embaſſys
Beſpeak thy cauſe unbleſt, thy councils vain.

II. 3.

Siſter ſov'reign of the wave!
Turn from this ill-omen'd war:
Turn to where the truly brave
Will not bluſh thy wrath to bear;
Swift on th' inſulting Gaul, thy native foe
(For he is Freedom's) let that wrath be hurl'd;
To his perfidious ports direct thy prow,
Arm every bark, be every ſail unfurl'd;
Seize this triumphant hour,
When, bright as gold from the refining flame,
Flows the clear current of thy KEPPEL's fame.
Give, to the Hero's full command,
Th' imperial Enſigns of thy naval power;
So ſhall his own bold auſpices prevail,
Nor Fraud's inſidious wiles, nor Envy pale
Arreſt the force of his victorious band.
The Gaul ſubdued, fraternal ſtrife ſhall ceaſe,
And firm, on Freedom's baſe, be fixt an Empire's Peace.

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FINIS.